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ON BANK-SERVICE IN CANADA.

POLITICAL and social life in America have been often described. The idiosyncrasies of the people—their hurry, impulsiveness, and extravagance—form the staples of our tourists' books. All travellers look through the same telescope, but through alternate ends. Mr Puff, resolving to write 'a work' upon the 'great republic,' obtains a huge magnifying-glass, and landing upon the pier at New York, mounts the first wood-pile to take an observation. He is of course lost in wonder and delight, for he has resolved to make a great deal of his theme. Not so with the astute Doctor Derogate, who sets his eye to the big end of the glass, and reconnoitres the most insignificant country in the world. He is satisfied of this when he walks around his tripod, and looks back, through the other end, upon the land of his nativity.

But there are many things in America which neither Messrs Puff nor Derogate can see. The little phenomena which furnish the best clues require microscopic investigation. They must be observed closely, carefully, continuously, and by those who *dwell*—not those who run. What, for example, can a flighty tourist know of homes in the far west? He sees the forests and the prairies, but there are huts amid them where men and children live. He looks down upon vast cities, which have sprung up in a night; the smoke of their thousand hearths curls towards him, the church spires glitter beneath, the river and the shipping cluster around; but deep in their intricacies abide strange beings—the base, the wanton, the wretched. These have not entered into our sage reports, though criminal life across the Atlantic is one of the most unique and individual manifestations of that anomalous society.

Crime is universal. It is the great pioneer and colonist. Cramped in old and dense populations, its restless instincts impel it to wild and far-off adventure. From the flight of Cain to the exodus of British convicts, the men of sin have been the founders of nations. They hew down the wildernesses, throttle the vipers, and slay the savages.

Then come better and more timid folk, to establish order and religion; and in course of time, the original knaves are canonised, and sounding pedigrees are traced to them. Just such a transition is taking place now in America. The young republic is still the great Alsatia for the Old World's unworthy and disaffected subjects. The enterprise of the country is a legitimate development of these classes; so likewise is its aggressiveness, its speculation, its recklessness. The new element is gaining the ascendancy, at least in the older settlements, but a great deal of crime exists, though it is exercised in new and curious modes. Prior to the present civil war, there existed no national paper-currency in the United States. Thousands of corporations, more or less irresponsible, issued promises to pay, and the monetary insecurity thus engendered, gave licence to all descriptions of forging and counterfeiting.

I was sitting in the office of my journal one evening, when Detective Ballagan came in. He had promised to notify me of the first good 'case' of which he might have charge, and at present he was on the track of a notorious offender, by name Jules Ingram, a native of Martinique. This man had been chief-clerk in the largest produce-house of the West India Islands, where he had swindled to the amount of fifty thousand dollars, and had escaped to New York. He brought with him blank bill-heads and drafts of every business firm in the tropics, and had deposited these at a hotel on the quay. After a year of prodigious success, he was caught in Missouri, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. His discharge marks a singular adjustment of time to crime. Within twelve hours after the forger recovered his documents, the place of deposit was in ashes. He renewed his guilty career immediately, obtained five thousand dollars within a week, and escaping to Canada, threatened to plunder every American banker from Portland to Galveston. He was an accomplished penman, scholar, and bookkeeper, thoroughly conversant with business details, and had so mastered the secrets of the postal system, that he could operate by proxy, and ubiquitously.

He was believed now to be dwelling on the frontier; and the bankers of all the Atlantic cities had subscribed funds for his apprehension and conviction at whatever cost. A woman to whom Ingram was attached had been seen at Albany, going westward. It was probable that she and the forger were not far apart, and Ballagan wished me to proceed northward with him the same afternoon, that he might keep closely upon their trail. We followed by rail the windings of the palisaded Hudson, threaded the rich valley of the Mohawk, and at Rome, an ambitious settlement of North-western New York, heard by telegraph of a new feat of Ingram at Watertown, on the falls of Black River, near the head of Lake Ontario. He undoubtedly meant to dwell without Federal jurisdiction, appear periodically in the States, and after each offence, escape across the St Lawrence. There was, I believe, an extradition treaty, embracing the crime of forgery; but the formalities of law, and the jealousies of Canadian and State officials, practically annulled it. Ballagan was shrewd and bold; he determined to entrap Ingram, if possible; but in the failure of intrigue, to seize and kidnap him anywhere upon foreign soil. The reward would be large; and the detective had taken me with him, that I might give the capture a newspaper notoriety, and so challenge the generosity of the bankers. We were armed with fowling-pieces, and meant to hunt and fish along the lake-border, Ballagan to watch the telegraph stations, and I to play the guileless young sportsman among frontier girls and gossip. Neither of us had seen Ingram, but we carried his photograph. It represented a small, thoughtful, grizzle-haired man, addicted to cigars and an eye-glass. I thought I could recognise the original if I saw him, but had qualms as to the repute to be derived from thief-catching.

The detective's first precaution was to forward a description of the felon to every revenue-officer upon the American bank of the St Lawrence. The functions of these did not embrace state crimes, of which forgery was one, and they were therefore charged to detain Ingram for debasing the currency—a national offence.

After three days of provoking ill-success, we traced the forger's female accomplice to Cape Vincent, a paltry American village at the junction of the lake and the river. Here she had mysteriously disappeared; neither the return rail nor the Canada ferry, nor any of the border steamers, had taken her aboard: the conclusion of Ballagan was prompt and sagacious—she had met the forger himself, and he had spirited her away. The river was here seven or ten miles broad, and divided by many islands. Ingram may have located himself upon one of these, and by means of a row-boat, made his passage to either mainland. We acted upon the surmise at once, hired oarsmen and a bateau, and beat up and down the channel for many leagues. It was rare sport to take the silvery pickerel and muscolung, and I would gladly have relinquished the human prey for these inoffensive creatures. The skies were cool and clear; the river ran steadily seaward without a tide, laving fantastic bluffs, fringed with a strip of beach, and plumed with black-boughed cedars. The panther and the Indian were around us, as in colonial days; now and then, the red fisherman and his squaw drank from our canteens stolidly; and we brought down many a wild goose from his dream in the clouds.

This was America as we knew it in the ideal—wild, solitary, boundless—yet here were we on the proud St Lawrence, with the prosaic purpose of capturing a jail-bird. For a week, our efforts were futile; there were a few farmhouses upon the frontier islands, but we were satisfied that Ingram harboured in none of them, and the configuration of the coast was such that the exploration promised to be interminable. In the meantime, the rogue attempted a third forgery at Ogdensburg, fifty miles distant, and the press teemed with complaints of the police system and of Ballagan.

It was on the twelfth day of our adventure, that the detective, sick of care and exposure, made over to me the boat and outfit. The waterman rowed me at dawn to a cove within Wolf Island, the largest of the group; it was a lonely place, removed from either channel of the river, visible from neither mainland, and out of sight of every sail and habitation. I made fast my line at three hundred yards; the burnished bait skimmed the surface like a star; the rower never tired nor slackened, and before nine o'clock, I had taken a score of pickerel, not one of which weighed less than six pounds. I was now reminded of breakfast; the island was near at hand; and as we pulled along the border to find a landing, a turn in the coast revealed a comfortable frame-dwelling, set against a ridge of thick timber, and flanked by a smooth beach. Smoke curled from its chimney, a boat bordered the strand, and a dog rose up and howled as our oars awakened him. Directly, a man and a woman appeared at the door; the former walked down to the skiff, and leaping into it, sculled rapidly away, without saying a word. The woman received us shyly, but hospitably. She gave my man the use of fire and kettle; and while he cleaned and prepared the fish, I strolled into the yard to regard the establishment. The wood grew tall and tangled close to the premises; there seemed no approach but by the cove; the dwelling was almost without furniture; neither cattle, nor sheep, nor poultry inhabited the barn; and the only sounds to break the general hush were those of wild birds careening overhead, or the waters plashing upon the sands. A turn in the edge of the cedars brought me to a path, which I pursued curiously, till it stopped at the brink of a pool or inlet, where a raft lay moored to the shore. As similar channels environed the dwelling, I concluded that it stood upon a small, separate island, and had for this reason escaped our previous notice. The woman was watching me from a window as I returned. She was handsome, but not prepossessing—a fine animal face, a little dissolute perhaps, and strangely out of place in this bleak, secluded country. She was indisposed to converse, admitted that she had lived here but a little while, and at length, weary with *ennui*, took a yellow-covered novel from a shelf, and read in uneasy silence, eyeing me at intervals. The scene was oddly composed; a painting of it would have been unpardonable—the bare floors and walls, the wild pines and cedars, the desolate lawn and water, and this fine, fashionable, sensual woman, reading a loose novel amid the ruin. I took down the few books from the shelf: Hunt's *Merchants' Magazine*, a pile of shipping lists, a manual of book-keeping, a lot of business directories, a treatise on commercial law—an odd library, surely, for the wilderness. Revolving these things in my mind as I ate, I

made a second abortive attempt to engage madame's attention, and at last bade her good-bye.

'Row me to the Canada shore,' I said to the waterman; 'we will spend a night with the British Lion.'

I landed at a hamlet near the city of Kingston, and proceeding to a tidy tavern, stretched myself beneath a window, and essayed to read a newspaper. Dulness and fatigue induced drowsiness. I was half-way into a dream, when the entrance of somebody disturbed me. A person in a gray coat had taken up the journal, and was perusing it by the aid of an eye-glass. His side and back were turned towards me, but I thought I recognised him as the surly occupant of the dwelling upon the cove. He was small, lithe, and gentlemanly; and after awhile he took a billet from his pocket, folded it, and lighting a cigar, threw away the remnant of the paper. A commotion of some description now attracted him to the exterior, and before I could compose myself to sleep again, the noise in front grew fierce and boisterous. I found the stranger wrangling with a knot of boors who had lately lost some horses, and were disposed to regard all unknown folk as thieves. He was calm and polite, and having abashed them somewhat, withdrew to his vessel, and pushed into the stream. As he stood up in the bateau, and faced me for the first time, the conviction rushed upon me that this man and Jules Ingram were one! The photograph in the possession of Ballagan could have been taken from no other face. The same small, thoughtful, grizzle-haired man regarded me; there were the eye-glass and the cigar; and as, with a quick heart, I recalled each shade and feature, the fine lady on the lonely island came to memory: she was the creature of Jules Ingram; the bare dwelling was his retreat; the mercantile books were his aids to felony; the man before me was the forger!

Another clue at once suggested itself—the billet with which he had lighted his cigar. I entered the bar-room tremulously, and took the remnant from the floor; the blood gushed to my face at the first word:

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The paper was a blank bill of exchange, one of many with which the culprit had operated! I waited no longer, but summoned my waterman, and relieving each other at the oars, we reached Cape Vincent at dusk. It was not without remorse that I confided my discoveries to Ballagan. I regretted that it had been my destiny to make them. The law had its paid agents, of whom I was not one. My meditations might not be soothed on bleak nights to come by the thought of a miserable man whom my officiousness had consigned to a cold prison cell. But now that the facts were in my possession, it was criminal to withhold them. I laid them before the detective as he lay in bed, leaning his powerful head and neck upon a muscular arm, and his small secretive eyes grew blank and expressionless, and he listened like one deaf. It was his professional way of denoting satisfaction.

'You must take the ferry to Kingston immediately,' he said; 'I will dictate a telegram and a

placard; the one must be despatched, and the other printed at once upon your arrival. Write!'

I took up pen and paper, and he outlined as follows:

'To all British officials and residents on the St Lawrence: I, Pepin Petit, of Fort Erie, Canada West, have lost eight prime horses. The thief is known to be a small, grizzle-haired, intelligent person, near-sighted, and wearing a gray coat; was last seen near Kingston, and is believed to dwell on or near Wolf Island. I will pay a thousand dollars for his detention; he will doubtless attempt to land between Kingston and Montreal.'

I dropped the pen indignantly.

'This is a lie, Ballagan!' I said; 'a trick of your craft; I will have nothing to do with it.'

'I place you under arrest!' thundered the giant, dashing away his coverlets. 'I have noticed your squeamishness; the law will hold you as an accomplice of the forger; it is in your power to serve justice: you refuse?—how will public opinion brand you?'

I saw my mistake, and confessed it. My companion was remorseless as a tiger. They paint Justice blind; her ministers are all too keen; but this man had no heart: he could not comprehend a scruple; he despised a sentiment or a fear; if his new-born babe had stood between himself and Jules Ingram, he would have trampled it down. I compared him only to a blood-hound at the end of the scent; half-dead with fatigue as he was, his jaws were quivering now; the tracks of the game were fresh, the smell of blood was in his nostrils, he was up and alert! That night the trains on the Grand Trunk Railway carried hand-bills to every river-side village; the Canada shore was closed against the forger as securely as the American shore had already been. Horse-thieving was not less heinous than murder, where live-stock constituted the sole riches of a people; they would watch for Jules Ingram like savages nourishing a *vendetta*. He would have but three alternatives: to take to the forests, at the peril of being devoured by panthers; to drift upon the broad Ontario, and perish by storm or hunger; or to follow the current of the river among the Thousand renowned isles, daring the passage of the rapids, until overtaking some European-bound vessel in the gulf, he might bid farewell to the New World. I slept little during the night, and sought the quay one hour before daybreak, that I might take the first ferry for Cape Vincent. The steamer had not come in; and as the air was very cool, I resorted to the furnace of a tow-boat just firing up alongside the wharf; the deck-hands were all gathered at the windows, peering in the darkness towards the American shore.

'What are you expecting, boys?' I asked.

'The ashoshishun fur the pertektion of property in hosses,' said a grimy engineer, 'has gone off to the island to burn out a hoss-thief. They been a suspectin' him for a week; to-night, a feller from Fort Erie brought positive proof. We are a-lookin' out for the blaze.'

In a few moments, the sky in mid-horizon lighted up; the woody outlines of the island were revealed flickeringly; shadows of flame were reflected across the broad, dark current, and soon we made out a black object advancing in the glare; it was the ferry-boat, and the first man to step ashore was Ballagan.

'Our friend has escaped,' he said; 'he left me a curious paper by his lady, who, unfortunately, has no dwelling at present, and I have given her shelter in the jail.'

I took the note in my hands; the writing was clear and beautiful, as if engraved.—'To the Detective stopping at Cape Vincent.—I would respectfully suggest that you are doing yourself and me wrong, not to say injustice. If you capture me, you make, say, three thousand dollars; give me fair-play one week, and I will give myself a hundred thousand dollars, and you twenty thousand. This is an honest proposition; consider it! I know that Canada and the States are alike shut to me, but I still live, and I will never be taken alive.—INGRAM.'

My first contributions to the Canadian journals were suggested by Ballagan, and appeared next morning. They were intended to inflame public sentiment, and related certain fables of Ingram's feats at running stock out of the colony. On the same night, every fireside from Toronto to Quebec was made acquainted with the fugitive's *personnel*. Vengeance was sworn against him wherever two booms met together. The farmer in the field kept one eye ever upon the river; each canoe, barge, smack, and steamer was subjected to espionage; the whole frontier was hunting down one man. We knew that he was adrift in his bateau, for now and then somebody would espie him for an instant gliding along the edges of bluffs, or sculling through fields of marine-grass, or vanishing behind a woody cape or island. Thrice he attempted to land, but the country-folk drove him back with execrations. The dairy-maid would not give him a cup of milk; the Indian refused him bread and fire; once some little children turned his boat adrift, but he swam astream, and recovered it. Thus, friendless, hungry, and at bay, he moved for ever northward toward the cold gulf, till, having entered the romantic territory of the 'Thousand Isles,' we lost all traces of him. Our voyage through this most picturesque of archipelagoes was rendered thrice entrancing by the adventure which had developed it. There are said to be literally a thousand islands clustering in the broad neck or estuary of the St Lawrence. Many of them can scarcely afford foothold to a bird; others support a single miniature tree; some sustain huge masses of rock, piled in eccentric forms, and holding in their crevices the palms of climbing vines; a few are large and heavy with turf and woodland, and all are verdant as spring. A voyage among them is like the reading of a poem or the passing of a dream; one seems to be far aloft in a balloon, gazing at the diminished land and sea; for were there but little folk to inhabit these pigmy continents, we should have Liliputia indeed. Here, in winter, the drift-ice heaps up crags and monuments, and the floes and fields crush up in summer, as if they would bear the Thousand Isles away to their Arctic home; the wild birds bring forth their young upon the surface; the cold spawn of the fishes grows warm and vital beneath; the striped and spotted snake lies among their débris, charming the sparrow and the blue-jay; and the wolf passing from land to land, halts here in the dead midnight to howl. Not a human being tenants the Thousand Isles; they are sprinkled here and there in wondrous irregularity; the deep river winds in and out among them as if lost or tarrying;

and the tourist passing by is reminded of some tableau in the melodrama, too beautiful and unexpected to be real.

In pursuit of Ingram, we explored every islet of this region. We found a hundred traces of him, for he was for ever fitting to and fro—now the embers of his fire, now the echo of his rifle, now the report of some alarmed fisherman, whom the fugitive had passed like an apparition. One day at sunset we saw him—a ragged, haggard, hatless being, standing upon a rock scarcely larger than a man's hand, with the waters churning around him, and his bateau at his feet. He was sharply outlined against the red sky, and he stood in an attitude of despair, leaning wearily upon his rifle. I thought of the Wandering Jew, or the last Indian of his race, halting on the brink of the Pacific. Suddenly he beheld us; gnashing his teeth, and lifting his clenched hand, he leaped into his vessel, and sculled away like the wind; we lost him in the darkness, and saw him no more for many days.

Two weeks had now been consumed in this singular pursuit. At last, Ballagan became troubled and doubtful. It was possible for Ingram, changing his position every night, to lead us upon a wild chase for a year. He could plunder barns and river-craft for nourishment, and fish and game were plentiful. Desperate, in view of the penalty of his offence, we knew that roving among these green islands was consonant with his adventurous nature. Fresh from five years' entombment in the jail, and hopeful of guilty gain, he would leave no artifice untried to retain his liberty; and Ballagan feared that he would surrender himself to the Canadian authorities, when the device of Mr Pepin Petit might be manifest. One day, at Alexandria Bay, we received a dispatch from a station far down the river; Jules Ingram had been seen near the head of the First Rapid; he had foiled us, and with a long start, was making his way vigorously towards the Gulf of St Lawrence. Every stroke of the oars was a new hope to him; in ten hours, he would pass the American boundary-line, and then our difficulties would be multiplied tenfold. Ballagan acted with his usual decision; we took the first express steamer, and pushed on with all the energy of current and steam. It was midnight when we reached the head of the rapids, and as it was forbidden to descend them in the darkness, the vessel halted at a quay, and waited for the morning. It was a grand steamer—a 'floating palace'—and having walked with Ballagan up and down the cold promenade-deck, listening to the roar of the waters, I wearied of his impatience, and retired to my sumptuous state-room. I was soundly dreaming; my heart was back among the Thousand Isles, and our wild search was all forgotten, when raps upon my chamber-door brought me to my feet. It was Ballagan, and I knew by his blank, sphinx-like countenance that something was to ensue.

'Come out at once,' he said, in deep, unimpassioned monotone. 'Help me to launch the boat: you are to go on the water with me. No flinching! or, by the Great American Eagle, your life isn't worth a rushlight.'

A premonition of danger crept coldly upon me; I knew that he saw me falter, but I did not speak. I marked in the gray dawn from the windy deck the awful surging of the rapids, tossing their foamy hairs into the sky, blending their sprays in white

cataracts of mist, and dashing upon black rocks, imperfectly revealed, as if meaning to wrest them from their everlasting bases. The whole wide St Lawrence was a fierce, tumultuous torrent, boiling, and churning, and clamouring. The boles of some huge trees were passing down the current, and I marvelled to mark them tossed aloft like reeds, the waters catching them as they fell again, and hurling them high into the air, till, passing from cascade to cascade, they emerged at last a mile below, bruised, and scarred, and broken. Of what advantage would be a man's strength struggling with such an element? Pharaoh and his host, with all Egypt at their back, might have gone down in a twinkling there. Traditions existed of Indian hunters whose skilled hands had guided the canoe through this same flood, but no living man had dared the experiment. Huge steamers went down shivering, and some had been torn into splinters, while sailing-craft of all descriptions made the detour by canal.

'Do you see something stealing along the margin yonder?' said Ballagan to me. 'I have remarked it for an hour.'

I took his proffered glass, and recognised distinctly an approaching bateau, and a wild figure in a gray coat sculling in the stern. It was Jules Ingram. He was making energetically for the Canada shore, for he seemed to have an intuition of his proximity to the rapids; and ever and anon, as he advanced, his face was turned to regard the steamer distrustfully.

'Crouch here by the gunwale,' said Ballagan; 'when I give the word, run out the lines of the bateau. I shall have the oars; take you my rifle in the bow. Be cool and steady, and obey my orders.'

No soul was astir upon the vessel: we watched the guilty man with our hearts in our eyes. It required no effort of his to drive the bateau towards us, for the velocity of the current impelled it at racing-pace. At each instant, the dawn grew brighter; at each instant, the victim drew nearer. We marked him with the naked eye at length—a face like that of a wild beast, half furtive, half ferocious, and gaunt with hunger and anxiety; his grizzled hairs, uncovered, shaded his savage beard, and his inflamed eyes glared cavernously from their dark, deep sockets; his clothes were rent and stained; his feet were scarred and bare; yet with all this wretchedness, the attitude of the man was that of pride and defiance; it was the consciousness of deserved misery, for which he could not apologise, and which he had determined to endure.

The wharf to which we were moored kept him out of view of the rapids till he had drifted directly beneath us, and then the danger broke suddenly upon him. He seemed stricken dumb, and the oar quivered in his fingers. At the same moment, Ballagan called out to me to loosen my line. The boat dropped like a bolt; we clambered down as hastily. The detective seized the scull, while I crouched with the rifle at the bow, and pushing away in a trice, we had almost collided with Ingram's vessel, before he was well aware of our presence.

It was a pause of a second. The wretch gave one fierce glance at the shore, the steamer, and the cataract, and then, with the impulse of despair, struck out boldly for the rapids.

He had not the strength of Ballagan, but he was a better hand with the oar. His hairs blazed in the wind; his rags fluttered, and his eyes distended till their pupils grew small and glittering. Both men worked with the energy of death; the one to overtake and capture before the sluice had pulled them in; the other to intimidate, perhaps, by a semblance of engulfing both, or failing, to make that semblance a terrible reality.

My senses were marvellously acute: there was no tiny moving thing in nature which I did not observe; the twitter of a passing swallow; a chip moving on the waves; a little fish fluttering at the surface; a distant hawk, swooping like a speck in the sky; the rocking of the boat, and the crack of a splay in the oar; each carved device upon the stock of the rifle; the first sunbeam; the cry of an alarmed man upon the steamer, and the passengers hurrying upon deck. It was the awakening of every energy—prelude to a violent death—admonishing man of the glory of that organism which a moment is to shatter for ever.

I had still hope, for we glided yet smoothly upon the current. It must be that we were gaining upon Ingram; he dared not perish with his crimes upon his head; he meant to turn and submit; there was still time to escape the cataract. Should I stop his career with the rifle? I lifted the bright barrel, with murder half-way in my heart; my nerves were taut as wires; I could have dropped him dead at his helm as readily as one wings a crow. He saw me glance down the groove, and his face froze my blood: it was mine reflected—all the agonies of man's nature pleading for life, life, life!

'Do not fire, boy!' cried Ballagan between his teeth; 'I will take him alive, or die with him!'

On, and on, and on we galloped—the two oarsmen with black faces wrenching the waters apart, and I could hear the hard breathing of both till the roar of the river absorbed all sound. So quickly ran my thought, that I likened the noise of the waters to human speech: they seemed to be shrieking: 'Drowned, drowned, drowned!' and the cry rang out so sonorously thrilling that I caught myself repeating it. I wondered if each drop of water had not identity, and the waves a community of intelligence, and every cataract a like ambition, and that ambition now—my death! Still I saw everything. There was a rocky island covered with trees, just in the edge of the rapids; that was our last salvation; if the boat passed it by, there was nothing left for hope. Already the spray was lapping us; the waters were hoarse and thirsty; I looked at Ballagan with dry, mute eyes, but saw no mercy there.

'Pray, boy,' he said—'pray for us both, and hold fast! I am going down the flood.'

The island passed us at a wink. I felt the boat lifted bodily, and the earth seemed to leap up and crush it as we fell. Again we vaulted aloft, so far that in the terror of the end I had time to note on the crowded decks of the steamer one woman praying with clasped hands, and another who had swooned; the planks of the bateau were bent like withes of straw, the waves gushed from stern to stern; I was lifted from my feet, and hurled against Ballagan, but he stood at the oar like a rock; I saw through my drenched eyes the forger as rigidly fixed; his vessel moved like a winged thing, rather of the air than of the element; and even in this time of despair, his face was dark and

haughty. Something stood amid-stream as I gazed—black, jagged rocks, and we were hurled upon them. The craft seemed crunching to atoms as we struck; it rose vertically, and the foam gushed in at the bow. I knew that this was all. Once more I marked the white waste of waves, the vanishing islands, the flitting banks and trees and dwellings; and as a soft vision of home blinded my wet eyes, I called upon the name of One mighty to save, and clutched the cold planks, and knew no more.

A thunderbolt apparently awakened me, and a terrible weight was pressing upon my chest. I was lying in the bottom of the boat, now half-full of water, and Ballagan was holding me fast with his foot. I could scarcely see his face for smoke, but a moment revealed him, standing grimly erect with the rifle at his shoulder.

'Rise!' he said, releasing me; 'we are fast sinking. Bear a hand with the oar, and give me place in the bow.'

I staggered up tremblingly; we had passed the rapids; they were churning behind us; the felon glided on before, but I marked that the scull had splintered in his fingers, and he was wringing his hands in pain: the bullet of the detective had broken his oar fairly at the junction of shaft and paddle, and his arms were palsied by the shock. In a twinkling he leaped for the second oar, but ere he could employ it, the bateaux collided, and he met Ballagan at the gunwale, knife in hand. The detective, clubbing the rifle, struck him a powerful blow, which stretched him prostrate like a dead man.

The hunt was over; the felon was captive at last, and as we headed his launch for the shore, our own went down in ten-fathom water.

We landed upon the southern bank of the St Lawrence; and Ballagan, with his usual promptness, decided to undertake the wild passage of the adjacent forest, in preference to returning by steamer, with the prospect of trouble from provincial officials. I have not the space to describe many exciting incidents of this journey. We kept southwards for three weeks, travelling on foot, and came to habitations at the foot of the Adirondac Mountains, in the state of New York. Jules Ingram was duly indicted upon four bills of forgery; but the hardships of his frontier exile had been too great for his feeble constitution. He died in the dock, cool and self-reliant to the last.

Ballagan earned money enough to retire from the police body; he has found his quietus in the present civil war; but in the interregnum, we had frequent laughs over the fate of Pepin Petit, Esq., the eminent stock-dealer, who 'perished in the Cedar Rapids, accompanied by two unknown persons.'

ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE LIFE.

THE muscles in the human body are more than five hundred in number, and almost every motion is produced, not by the action of one, but of several muscles. The muscular system in man not only moves the body, but expresses thought and emotion, and is capable of a very high degree of education. The accomplished tragedian and musician manifest, in their performances, the degree to which the muscles of expression and voluntary motion may be educated. The body

of man is capable, through the agency of his highly-developed nervo-muscular system, of an infinite variety of movement and expression. In man, the muscles of expression are chiefly in the face. All persons, to a greater or less extent, communicate thought by the expression of their countenance; in some, however, the muscles of expression respond much more readily to the emotions of the mind than in others, every shade of thought and feeling being beautifully depicted in their faces.

As the expression of the face is put on in obedience to the promptings of the will, the countenance is an indication of the mind within. The habitual indulgence of certain passions calls into play corresponding facial muscles, and also certain folds or corrugations of skin in the face, and this, too, without our being conscious of it. The individual features thus assume a joyful, mournful, or scornful character. This is a wise provision of nature; the lines of vice or virtue are thus depicted on the countenance, and man is made to carry in his own face a warning or recommendation. Correct conduct and a good conscience, more than anything else, give beauty and nobility to the features; and a countenance on which nature thus truthfully engraves the lines of uprightness, is ever pleasing, and will carry its owner through the world.

The amount of emotional expression of which the inferior animals are capable, is much more limited in its character, and is generally confined to some other part of the body. The dog wags his tail, the cat elevates her back, the horse erects his ears, and the game-cock spreads out his ruff of feathers on his head. The countenance of the inferior animals is in general devoid of expression; rage and fear are almost the only passions which are expressed in their faces. Their muscular movements are susceptible of education, as is evident from the performances of dancing-dogs and bears, but not to the same extent as those of man, owing to the low degree of their intelligence.

The organs of prehension and locomotion—the hands and arms, feet and legs—connected with the trunk or spinal column, are found in man in the highest state of perfection. The same organs in the inferior animals consist essentially of the same bones, muscles, blood-vessels, and nerves; and hence, in comparative anatomy, they are called by the same names; but these bones and muscles, &c., are organically modified to the intelligence, peculiar habits, and powers of locomotion of the animal. As we descend in nature, and the powers of animal life become less manifested, the nervo-muscular apparatus becomes greatly simplified. The limbs connected with the spinal column in the higher vertebrata are gradually absorbed in the lower, until at length, in the serpent tribes, these organs are suppressed altogether, and the body of the animal consists of little else but the spinal column itself, which is very long and extremely flexible, owing to the immense number of vertebrae, and their connection with each other by a ball-and-socket joint. The perceptions of the animal are now obtuse, and all its movements sluggish—a mere trailing of the body along the ground. The sternum is altogether absent from snakes; and in consequence of this, the extremities of their ribs are free, and become, in fact, the fixed points or feet on which the reptile crawls.

The same gradual simplification of the nervo-muscular apparatus may be traced throughout the descending series of invertebrated animals. Insects may be truly regarded as the most highly developed of the invertebrata. In them, the animal functions are decidedly more developed than the vegetative. Their rapidity of motion and extraordinary display of intelligence entitle them to this position. The tegumentary skeleton of insects is composed of a number of movable pieces articulated with each other, and is of a horny texture. This integument or covering becomes progressively hardened, and its pieces fewer in number and more consolidated in the different orders of the crustacea, so that the movements are necessarily much more restricted and confined. In the testaceous mollusca, the integument is finally reduced to a pair of valves, and the muscular movements of the animal are of the simplest character. Most of the bivalve mussels, such as the cardium or cockle, move along by means of a fleshy organ called a foot. The movements of the oyster are restricted to the single act of opening and closing its shell, and those of serpulæ and limpets, to the alternate protrusion and withdrawal of their tentacula within their shelly coverings. What a contrast do the simple muscular motions of these animals present to the complicated muscular machinery of the human frame! How immense the chasm of separation between these creatures and man!

Now, just in proportion as this nervo-muscular system of animal life is thus gradually suppressed, does the vegetative life of the organism manifest itself. Thus, the lower orders of animals—such as the squirrel, dormouse, and marmot—become torpid and inactive in common with plants in winter. The squirrel and dormouse retire into situations favourable for the retention of their warmth; occasionally wake up in mild weather to feed on their store of acorns, haws, and hazelnuts, but pass the greater part of the season in a state of torpor. These animals may be roused in winter, but soon go to sleep again; their breathing still continues, although diminished in frequency. But in the marmot and other animals which hibernate completely, the heat of the body almost entirely accords with that of the common air, being seldom more than one or two degrees higher. The respiratory movements fall from five hundred to fourteen per hour, and the pulse sinks from one hundred-and-fifty to fifteen beats per minute.

There appears also to be some continuance of vital activity amongst plants; as, for example, evergreens. The leaves of these plants are more or less in action during winter. A low degree of warmth will even in the depth of winter start the sap of plants. Thus, if incisions be made into the stem and branches of a young maple in winter, if the weather should become mild, the sap will be seen to trickle from the wound; so, also, coniferous plants—such as pines and firs, which abound in resin—maintain their temperature above the freezing-point even in the severest weather. Their fluids are never wholly congealed, owing to their viscosity. In the strongest January's frost, the trees of the mountains—the noble hardy pines and firs—ripen their seeds. In winter, the inside of all trees examined with a thermometer shews a higher temperature than that of the surrounding air, and this warmth is a proof of vital changes. As a general rule, however, winter is a state of repose to

all the lower forms of plants and animals. As the temperature of the air declines to the freezing-point, the movements of life either cease altogether, or become, vulgarly speaking, quite imperceptible; but when the temperature again rises, the usual activity of the plant and animal returns.

Again, all animals below man annually change their epidermal appendages. The serpent casts its skin, the bird its feathers, crabs and lobsters their shells, just as the leaves and bark fall from the branches and stems of trees. Thus, in early spring, when plants put forth new leaves and flowers, we have renewed at the same time the hair, feathers, scales, horns, and other external appendages of animals. Both plants and animals are alike re-clothed. Some birds appear so different at this time—for they are then clad in their most brilliant attire—that zoologists are always careful to indicate whether or not a bird is represented at the breeding season. Similar differences occur amongst fishes and other animals, whose colours are then much brighter.

Once more, the exercise of the reproductive function, which in man is not limited to any particular time, is periodical in inferior animals, precisely as plants flower and fruit at certain seasons of the year. In all the inferior orders of animals, the reproductive organs have their times of repose and periods of activity. When the spring sun pours on the earth, cold and damp with the snows of winter, his warm, life-giving radiance, and the trees put on their new leaf-dress and floral ornaments, then it is that the animals begin to pair—each song-bird that comes back to us again from the sunny south finds its appropriate mate. It is the season of love and happiness. All nature rejoices. To many organised beings, it comes only once. In this respect, many animals are like annual plants, perishing as soon as they have given birth to their eggs. The lives of insects, especially, are thus limited. This annual moult of the feathers of birds, the hair of quadrupeds, and the skin of reptiles; this periodicity in their manifestations of heat, and this oscillation of their life between a state of repose and one of activity—all these phenomena are purely vegetative, proceeding from the operation of that life which the inferior animals possess in common with plants.

Well-marked and obvious distinctions between animals and plants exist, therefore, only in the more highly-organised forms of animal and vegetable life. As we descend to beings of a lower rank in creation, these distinctions become gradually effaced, and we see successively disappear the most important organs of animal life. The organs of the senses become rudimentary; bones, blood-vessels, and nerves totally disappear; and in proportion as the powers of animal life are suppressed, as we have already shewn, those which are truly vegetative gain the ascendancy. At length, in the lowest orders of the animal creation, the animal and plant approach each other so closely, that it is hardly possible to draw any line of demarcation between them. This is the case, for example, with that order of animals which have been very properly called by naturalists zoophytes, of which the coral and sponge are familiar examples.

It is, however, amongst the algae or sea-weed family that vegetable and animal life appear to be the most completely blended together. It is well known to naturalists that the spores of some of our

common fresh-water alga, when first discharged into the water, move about by means of certain ciliary appendages during a certain period of their life. At this stage of development they were observed by Ehrenberg, one of the most careful and accurate of naturalists, and were actually figured by him as infusorial animalcules. After a while, however, their cilia are absorbed, their motions cease; they become attached to some substance in the stream, and develop into plants, fixed and immovable, except from the influence of the current. It would appear from this that these simple unicellular organisms are animals during the first period of their life, and vegetables towards its close.

All organised matter, whether animal or vegetable, consists of cells, and life is only known to us as manifested through their agency. Not only may every animal and plant be traced back to a simple cell, but organic nature is evidently only a series of forms, which exhibit the successive stages of its development. The animal and plant seem to be blended together in this the primitive form of all organised being. The animal and plant world, in reference to their mutual relationship, may be represented by two cones, one of which is inverted on the other, so that their summits are brought into mutual contact; for there is a point of departure common to both of these grand divisions of living nature—the *organic cell*, which, animated, commences the animal series, and remaining immovable, serves as the basis of the vegetable creation. This organic cell may be imagined to be situated at the apex of the cones, the lower cone representing the vegetable, and the upper cone the animal creation. Plants and animals increase in organic simplicity, and the analogies between them multiply and become more striking in proportion to their approach to this point; while, on the contrary, the differences which separate them increase, and their organisation becomes more complicated, as they elongate from it. These unicellular organisms are common to both kingdoms, and are called by naturalists protozoa, or first-animals, and protophyta, first-plants.

Life in plants is therefore limited to the two functions of nutrition and reproduction; and nutrition and reproduction in animals are necessarily illustrated by the flowers and forest-trees with which the earth is beautified and adorned. Such appears to me to be the way in which organic nature ought to be viewed—such the relative positions of the vegetable and animal creation.

There are a great many resemblances between human life and plant-life. We are more governed by the laws to which plants are subjected, and more closely related to them than we are apt to imagine. One thing is certain, that all animals, including man himself, have a life which they share in common with plants. When a man dies, his breathing ceases, his heart-beats become less frequent, his blood stagnates; he is cold at his extremities; he ceases to breathe, his heart-beat stops, he ceases to live. The body becomes disorganised, undergoes chemical decomposition, and is resolved into its original elements of earth and air. It is much the same with a plant. I have before me one in a flower-pot, which is manifesting all these, or, at any rate, very similar, symptoms. It is ceasing to breathe, or breathes only imperfectly. I know this, because its leaves are turning a sickly yellow; they are becoming decolourised. Its sap is gradu-

ally stagnating in its tissues. From some of the leaves the sap is evidently withdrawn, for they no longer retain their rigidity and wonted form; the blade of the leaf is dry and shrivelled, and the least touch detaches it from the branches. Those leaves are held together on that plant-stem and its branches by the attraction of life; some of them, although they have lost their green colour, still retain their form and rigidity; they have therefore a sufficient amount of life-attraction left to keep the sap in their leaf-blades. They will become dry and shrivelled like the others when the sap leaves them. The life thus departing from the leaves in succession will finally leave the stem itself. I cannot help feeling deeply interested in this dying plant—in its life thus gently, gradually expiring, it is so like the gentle death of some that I have loved. Surely, this view of nature is not far from correct, and it certainly renders the plant-world additionally interesting. Plant-life seems to me to be life simplified for our instruction, and its study now very properly precedes that of animal life. Man and the flowers alike awake to greet the morning sun, but when the life-force of both is spent, they do not stir with the rest of nature, when the sunlight once more crimsones the eastern heavens. They have become subject to other laws. Human life will be better understood when plant-life shall be more profoundly studied. Where should the naturalist stop, when he finds in nature all the forms of organised being shading off into each other, and linked together in inseparable bonds?

MARRIED BENEATH HIM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.—EVIL TIDINGS.

THE few words spoken by the simple carrier into Frederick Galton's ear transformed him as completely into another being as magic wand was ever fabled to do. His outward form, indeed, remained unchanged, save that his cheek, flushed with wine and quarrel, turned to a deadly paleness, but his heart seemed to collapse within him, leaving an aching void, and a flood of vague remorseful memories rushed to his brain, and drowned all present thought. He found himself in the street, and in a cab with the messenger, with the horse going as fast as it could lay legs to ground, before he was well aware that he had left the club-room, with its excited faces and eager tones. Then he cried: 'Stop! I must call somewhere; I cannot leave town without'—

'Nay, Master Frederick, but we shall miss the mail,' interrupted the carrier appealingly. 'Your father is very ill.'

'I know that, man,' returned the other fiercely. 'He is dying—I read that in your eyes; but for one instant—for one single instant'— He put his head out of the window hastily, so that his spring-hat fell out, and was crushed under the wheels, and cried out to the driver: 'Lower Seymour Street. It is on your way—quick, quick!' Then he drew in his pale face speckled with dirty snow—for there had been a heavy fall for days, and it was now thawing fast—and sat with his fingers upon the outside handle of the door, ready to leap forth without delay. As the cab slackened pace before the house he did so, and opened the

front-door, and was in the passage in a moment; yet not so soon but that a flood of light poured into it from the ground-floor sitting-room, and a female form came out to meet him, and cast her arms about his neck. He was back again in the cab, after one hurried sentence, and the wheels were in motion, in less time than it takes to write it; and the woman was standing in the doorway, her look of welcome changed to one of wondering sorrow, as she gazed after the retreating vehicle.

The face of Jacob Lunes, too, was altered for the worse. 'I am sorry you stopped, Master Frederick,' said he gravely, 'since—you must forgive me for saying so—it'—The bluff carrier was about to say something severe upon the conduct of the lad, whom he had known from the cradle, and seen, and probably spoken with, every other day of his life; but the anguish depicted in the young man's features stayed his speech. 'The Lord have mercy upon us all, Master Frederick, young and old!' said he instead; 'though there are some as seem to be as good as angels already. I am sure your father is as pure in soul as any fellow-creature breathing; if good wishes can carry a man up to heaven, the prayers of all poor folks nigh Casterton, sir—' Pray, pray, don't take on so, Master Frederick; while there's life there's hope, you know.'

'Go on, Jacob, go on,' sobbed the young man; 'it does one good to hear you. I can listen to you now, as I could not do a while ago. Here is the station, and we are in time, thank Heaven! When we get into the train, tell me all that has happened, and do not mind if I don't speak, Jacob—I shall hear.'

So Frederick Galton sat in one corner of the railway carriage, where the light from the pale oil-lamp scarcely fell on him at all, and listened in silence.

'It was the night afore last, Master Frederick, and snowin' hard, as it had been doin' for a week before, when the doctor was sent for to Nancy Reeves, a labourer's wife, away beyond Bilbury Clumps; I should say five miles or more. It ought to have been a parish case, but your father was allus for sparing that young Union Sawbones. "And, besides," says he, "I can get there in my gig in half the time, and it's ten to one he loses himself in the snow, being strange to the Downs." Then the poor woman, too—her husband was away, you see, and this her eleventh child—was in that sort of condition towards which I think your good father was more particular tender. You see, he lost your mother, Master Frederick, in childbirth; and all husbands—this is what my old woman says, at least, and she knows a vast—has a sort of claim upon him, as he thinks, so as they should not be left, if he can help it any way, all desolate-like, and forsaken, as he himself was, until, leastways, you grewed up'—

'And afterwards,' groaned Frederick bitterly, 'I forsook him, Jacob, I'—

'Nay, nay; don't take on so, sir; young men will be young men. You couldn't be expected to be mewed up—he said so himself, he did indeed—in a little country village, being such a clever young gentleman; and he tried to reconcile himself all he could when he was left lonesome-like, and worked—the dear gentleman did, even harder than ever. God knows, it was not to get gain neither; his visits cost him something, instead of winning

him reward, they did, for his hand was open to the poor. You are all that, that I will say; you and your uncle, and your father—none of you knows how to say "No" when another says "Give." Lord! how he have got took in, again and again; but then it ain't lost—that's what my old woman says—it's all keep an account of; and I wish such a ledger, or anything like it, was awaiting me, as the angel book-keepers have got to shew in favour of your father. God bless him! God bless him! The good carrier broke down for a little while, for he could stand wind and weather better than the telling of bad news. 'I ax your pardon, Master Frederick; but he was a good friend to me and mine, was your father, years before you was borned into this world; and at my time of life, why, we don't make new friends.'

'No, nor forget old ones, Jacob. Go on; I deserve anything.'

'Why, Master Frederick, I meant nothing against you; don't think it for a moment. Of course, a young gentleman like you must make new friends, both men and women; though, as to women, I honestly tell you it give me a turn just now to see the face I did at the door we stopped at. Nothing comes of that sort of thing in the end but sorrow, if not worse: "in the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgment"—then it's a sad business. I ain't given to cantin' in a general way; but coming, as it might be, from your poor father's death-bed, why, it makes one serious-minded. And I am sorry—though it were no fault o' mine—that it was my cart as she first came in to Casterton.'

'Jacob Lunes,' returned the young man quietly, 'I know all you would say about that matter, and I am not angry. I have justly earned your ill opinion. But please to tell me now about my father.'

'Well, sir, he called up John, and bid him put the young mare in the buggy, although she was rather skittish for night-work, but they had all been out that day save her, and the doctor was always mindful of dumb beasts, and would never use a tired horse if he could help it. He would not let Joe drive the buggy either, but only took with him the little boy who had brought the message. What a blessed thing, Master Frederick, must it be to lose one's life in thinking for others!'

'I shall never die that way, Jacob,' murmured the young man sorrowfully. 'Go on, go on.'

'Well, sir, he did not come back that night, nor yet in the morning. At first, we thought it was only that Nancy was not getting over her trouble so easily as usual, and that your father had stayed at the cottage all night. But when in the afternoon the same messenger arrived at Casterton for some medicine the doctor had ordered, "when he left before daybreak," we knew that something dreadful must have happened to him. Then you might have seen how dearly we all loved your poor father, Master Frederick. Your uncle, and the Squire, and Farmer Groves, and all as had horses, started off in a great company over the Downs towards Bilbury; for it was plain that he had tried to come back that way, since, if he had kept the road, the lad must have seen traces of him. After them came well-nigh all in Casterton. The blacksmith left his anvil, and the cobbler his stall, for work was not to be thought of while the good doctor was missing; nay, even the postman, after his

weary day's walk, started off that afternoon across the snowy hills, as though he had never set foot to ground. It was necessary to go over the whole track before darkness set in a second time and fell upon him somewhere, lost upon the desolate white Downs—for that he had come to any harm from the hand of man was out of the question; not a rogue in the county was so great a rascal as to have done the doctor a bad turn; and as for enemies, he had none but Disease and Dirt, as ever I heard him speak of. He was always for whitewashing and window-opening, and such like, to an uncommon degree surely, which only shews that even the best of us has his weaknesses.

'Well, when we had got about three miles out, I was riding my old Dobbin, next man to the parson, but not very close, for we was a-spreading out pretty wide, near a quarter of a mile, as I should say, I see a dark speck on the snow, and it were moving slowly. This was the poor doctor's bay mare, a most dead beat, hobbling along through the deep snow with two broken traces and a bit of the gig-shaft dragging at her heels. Then we knew that what we was in search of was not far off. It was easy enough to track the wanderings of the poor creature; and presently, all of a sudden—for he was hidden by a great bank of snow—we come, Master Frederick, upon your poor father. He was a-lying on his back, with the gig turned over beside him, and there he had lain for hours and hours, for he couldn't move—no, not so much as turn his head. His poor back were broke, as I believe; and he must have suffered terrible. God only knows why. Why should I, a drunkard, sir, occasionally, and who minds my own concerns, and don't trouble about the misfortunes of others, have been sleeping in my bed, sound and hearty, all that night, and that good man have lain on the snow-covered rigdeway, with his face to the cold sky? Yet, if you'll believe it, he gave a smile as we came up, and murmured something about how good it were of us to come to seek him; yet how that he had expected nothing less from us. Squire Meyrick was kneeling over him, and weeping like a child; and Mr Morrit, I never see a man so moved in all my life—and yet such a head left to him. "We have not brought a doctor with us, William," said he, "although Watchem has been sent for; but we have an easy litter and bearers; only you must tell us how we can lift you, so as to cause you the least pain."

"Then a shudder seemed to fall upon your poor father's face, for he well knew what agony was awaiting him; the pain he was then suffering was dulled and blunted, I suppose, to what it was when he came to be moved, for he fainted right away, before the men got him upon their shoulders. And so we brought him home insensible, thank Heaven! and he was lying in his own bed when he came to again. Then the very first word as ever he spoke was "Frederick! where's my Frederick?" and Mr Morrit bid me put to Dobbin, and take the train to London, and bring you back home at once, wherever I could find you. I was to go to Mr Johnson's first, as you had changed your lodgings so often lately, and he would be likeliest to know where you were.'

At the station, there was a carriage and pair in waiting for Frederick. 'He is yet alive,' answered the driver to Jacob Lunes—and they wound their way up from the white-sheeted valley to the

Downland as fast as the snow would permit. The moonlight shed a ghastly paleness for a little upon all that the snow had spared, and then the treeless tract shewed even more unspeakably desolate in the gray and tardy dawn. It was scarcely daylight when they came in sight of the shining Round. How many a morning had smitten that lonely earthen citadel, bringing with it joy and sorrow, life and death, to succeeding generations! From henceforth, neither the romance of History nor the dawn of Love was to be associated with that monument of the past in Frederick's mind, but only the sense of Loss.

It had not fallen upon him as yet, however, for though the blinds were down, and the shutters closed in all other apartments of the cottage, his father's room, up to the window of which he looked with anxious fear, was not thus darkened, and the face of his uncle was at the pane, impatient for his coming.

It was Mr Morrit who opened the door before the carriage stopped, and took the youth's cold hand within his own, and led him into the house of mourning. Frederick understood the friendly firmness of his uncle's grasp, and returned it willingly. It was no time for quarrel now. They stood at the doorway of his father's room; he had but rarely entered it, and every time he had done so seemed to recur to him during the instant that he paused upon the threshold. He had learned his prayers there. He remembered kneeling down between his father's knees, with his childish hands folded within the doctor's palms, and repeating the simple words which he used even now morning and evening. He remembered with what delight he used to watch him shaving, an operation at once inexplicable and entrancing; and with what less agreeable feelings he was wont to repeat the multiplication and pence tables during other portions of the doctor's toilet. The good man had had such very little leisure, that he had made the most of every opportunity of getting the society of his boy. It was an apartment which he had regarded in childhood with mystic reverence, for his mother had died there. It had seemed so strange that people should die at all, and especially young people, and her picture told him how very young she was.

That portrait, which the doctor had caused to be taken to his son's room, either because he could not trust himself to look upon it, or to shew his love by lending him the most precious thing he had, had now been retransferred to his own chamber. It hung immediately opposite the sick man's pillow, so that it was always before his eyes. When Frederick entered, the motionless form upon the bed struck him with horror. The doctor was wont to have a brisk and cheery way of looking up at any arrival, even though he knew it was the messenger of tidings which would carry him upon a profitless journey over many miles; but now not a muscle moved. A sort of mellow sadness stole over the gray grave face; his eyes filled slowly with tears, and his lips gave audible thanks to Heaven for that he had been permitted to see his son before he died. It is a solemn reflection how often we are made the subject of prayer, the topic of spiritual intercourse between our Creator and those who love us; but when he who prays is within a very few hours, perhaps even minutes, of a personal communion with God, how awful is his mention

of our name! If the pure in heart shall see Him, Dr Galton was hastening of a surety into his august Presence. Everybody in the room knew that. Mrs Hartopp stood by the bedside weeping, but not sobbing, for she knew her duty as a sick-nurse too well for the indulgence of such weakness; and whenever she had to pass within the range of her dear master's vision, she took care that not a tear should be visible. Mr Morrit, except that his face was white, remained outwardly unmoved; but when he spoke, his voice was hoarse and broken. The parish doctor, a very young man, and not much used to such sad scenes, was perhaps the most overcome. Dr Galton had been very kind to him; it was actually in doing him a gratuitous service that he had met with his fatal misfortune. For the present time, at all events, gratitude and pity swallowed up all thoughts of extension of country practice, and promotion by decease.

It was a necessary attribute of Frederick Galton's mind that it should receive these impressions, just as the retina of his eye took in the material accessories of the scene, without his volition; but all his thoughts, as all his gaze, were concentrated upon his dying father. He stooped down and kissed his forehead, and then kneeling by the bedside, hid his face in the coverlet, and sobbed as though his heart would break.

'Robert,' said the sick man plaintively—as though he would have added: 'See what a sensitive nature, and how unfitted to battle with the world alone is here!'—'be a father to my boy.'

'I will, if he will let me, William,' returned the curate solemnly, but not without a jar in the words. 'He knows what you would wish—he knows'—The sentence was never finished. A sharp pain flitted across Dr Galton's face—Frederick thought it was an expression of distress at his uncle's tone—and was instantly replaced by a look of measureless content and calm. It was the welcome of the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

Frederick fainted away. When he came to himself, he was on the sofa in the little dining-room, with his uncle sitting by his head, and touching his temples with Eau-de-Cologne. 'You and I, dear boy, are now left alone in the world; your dear father has appointed me to be your guardian; but that is nothing compared to the importance of our being friends. Forgive me for speaking of anything save him at such a time as this; but I know how soon the heart of man grows callous, and forgets such scenes as that we have just witnessed. Frederick, he is gone from earth, but you owe him reverence still. His last thoughts, his last words were for your happiness: if he had had the power, he would have besought you to be guided by me in the one great act, which once committed is irrevocable. I charge you, by the remembrance of his love, now quick and warm within you, to promise me that you will never make an infamous marriage.'

Jacob Lunes, then, had told his uncle of the face that had looked after them so piteously, as they left it in its solitude in London.

'Sir,' answered Frederick coldly, 'I have never contemplated incurring any such disgrace.'

'I do not wish to argue, nephew; this is no time for that. Promise me that you will never marry Mary Perling.'

'I cannot well do that, uncle.'

'Why not, boy, why not?'

Mr Morrit spoke with impatience, but not with vexation; like one who perceives an obstacle indeed, but also the means of surmounting it.

'Because,' continued Frederick Galton, with quiet distinctness, 'Mary Perling and I have been married these five months.'

CHAPTER XXIX.—CUTTING THE PAINTER.

There are many persons, neither unintelligent nor imprudent, who do not possess the faculty of making the best of a bad job. This would seem, at first sight, to be the most ordinary exercise of common sense; yet people who especially pride themselves upon that very quality, are often the least capable of saying: 'Let bygones be bygones,' and 'Better luck next time.' They are so indignant that matters have turned out contrary to their sage expectations, and especially with those who have acted counter to their advice, that they proceed to behave with far greater folly than that which has aroused their wrath. The simple truth that What is done cannot be undone, fails to strike them with the proper force. Prevent, while it is yet preventable, by every possible means, your ward's running away with your footman. Drag the menial by his swallow-tails from the very altar of Hymen, and place his powdered head under the pump. Immure the would-be bride in the second-pair back, with nothing but works upon etiquette for her mental pabulum. Stick at nothing in the way of asseveration of how you will never advance her a shilling until you are obliged, nor give her intended husband a character for another place as long as he lives. Entreat, protest, denounce; you can scarcely go too far in the way of menace. But if the mischief is actually *done*; if John Thomas *has* married the heiress, she by no means unwilling, how foolish is it to put any of those prohibitory threats in action. It will only make matters worse to keep the young couple in penury; to oblige the bridegroom still to practise his profession in velvet smalls and silk stockings—to carry the poodle of his mistress, when he ought to be walking arm-in-arm with his lawful wife. The better plan would obviously be to settle the ill-assorted pair in some obscure locality, where the man might get accustomed to trousers, to wearing a hat without a gold band, and be broken as far as possible of his systematic abuse of the aspirate.

But nine guardians out of ten never behave half so sensibly as this. They pretend that they have a duty to perform towards Society, and that an example must be made of Miss Laura Matilda, in order that others may be deterred from doing likewise. Under this transparent falsehood, they work their own private revenge. Society is in reality delighted with the *mésalliance*, which affords it an exciting topic for days; while nothing could afford such genuine comfort to the injured guardian of social morality as the news that somebody else's ward had done the same, or worse. Ordinary folks do not act upon public grounds, while there are any private ones to go upon. When some striking event is suddenly dropped into the quiet backwater of our lives, it makes many circles, but the most clearly marked and sensible are those which are close at hand; it concerns ourselves, our families, our friends, our acquaintances, always

with lessening force, until it scarcely concerns Society at all, but only titillates it. Under these circumstances, the devotees who boast of sacrificing to so indifferent a divinity, must be looked upon with some suspicion.

When the Rev. Robert Morrit heard from his nephew's own lips that he had married his late father's household servant, he was honestly outraged and indignant. His language, considering the circumstances—the dead body of him they both loved best in the world being separated from them but by a board or two and the ceiling—was violent, and certainly what the lawyers call 'injurious.' He accused the young man of systematic hypocrisy and selfish passion. He even went so far as to say that his poor father had met with a kind friend in that Death which had spared him the knowledge of his son's unworthiness. But when the first burst of wrath was spent, and he took to talking of the sense of duty that would compel him to visit such unfilial conduct with marked severity, Frederick grew angry in his turn. He had expected an outbreak of resentment, and had made as much allowance for it as could be expected in one of his temperament, but he was not going to be made a public example for his uncle to preach against. In his contemptuous scorn at the exhibition of such vulgar malice, he permitted himself to utter certain home-truths concerning the curate.

'Look you, Mr Morrit,' said he, 'I am not a child any longer, so you may spare these remarks for your next sermon. You are speaking out of the bitterness of your own heart, under pretence of inculcating high-flown moral precepts. When all things go just as you would order them, there is not a more smooth-spoken, agreeable gentleman alive. You play the patron very graciously; but let the client presume to think for himself, and you become his tyrant. You, too, who are all for frankness, can be false enough, when you think falseness will serve your turn. You are not difficult to read, reverend sir, at all.'

'Frederick!—nephew! For God's sake do not speak so loud. Remember where you are, and what has happened. Are you mad?'

'Not speak so loud!' continued the young man mockingly. 'Ay, that is the parsons' creed all over. Let us be quiet, and shave smoothly. The strength of sin is in being found out. Yes, I do remember what has happened, sir, and I have to thank you for it. But for you and your family pride—which was not so stiff but that it stooped to lies—I should have been in my own home here, along with my dear father, and perhaps he would not have been.'

Mr Morrit rose, and held up his hand with quiet dignity.

'I say, sir,' continued Frederick, but less impetuously, 'that had he been left to himself without those worldly counsels, which become the mouth of a clergyman so ill, he would have consented long ago to my marriage. Who are you, that have dared to come with your shallow talk between a father and his only son?'

'I am your mother's brother, Frederick Galton, and, I regret to say, of the same blood, therefore, with yourself. I had every right to do all I could to save you—and myself, too, if you will have it so—from what I considered, and do consider still, a lifelong disgrace. You have forced this discussion upon me in this time and place'—

'What! I?' ejaculated the young man. 'I who woke from what I took to be a ghastly dream of my father's death, to hear my wife reviled by your sharp tongue. Indeed, Mr Morrit, both opportunity and theme were of your own gracious choice.'

'Then, in so far as they were so, I am sorry, Mr Frederick Galton,' returned the curate haughtily. 'In the name of common decency, let this matter rest for the present.'

'No, no, sir,' answered the young man hotly; 'since you have begun, pray, finish. There is something behind which you have yet to favour me with. You wear a concealed weapon; come, what is it? You strove to rob me of my father's love; perhaps you have succeeded in persuading him'—

Here the young man paused, ashamed. He was not so blinded by passion but that a remembrance of early days stole in upon his soul, and quenched his speech ere it had reached its bitter end. But a little more than twelve months back, this man, to whom he was attributing such baseness, had been his adviser, teacher, friend, his *beau-ideal* of a Christian gentleman. If any one, a year ago, had told him that he would one day seriously quarrel with his uncle Robert Morrit, he would have laughed at the absurdity of such a notion; yet now he was upon the point of accusing him, whom he knew to be one of the most generous of men, of covetous greed; nay, worse, of having endeavoured to enrich himself in a manner worse than fraudulent at his nephew's expense.

The supposition was hateful, and more like one of those monsters of the imagination that are said to intrude themselves at times into the thoughts of the purest, than any reasonable idea. Yet, strange to say, the curate's countenance did not express either contempt or indignation. It was hard, and even resentful, but there was a shamefacedness about it altogether inexplicable to the young man; and when the answer came, although determined and deliberate enough, it was couched in somewhat of an apologetic tone.

'It is perfectly true, Frederick Galton, that I have succeeded in persuading your father to leave his property in such a manner that I can exercise control over it for the next six years—until, that is, you are of the age of twenty-five; while, if you die in the meantime, I should become the inheritor of all you possess.'

Frederick started up with an oath upon his lips, the first the curate had ever heard him speak, the first, perhaps, he had ever uttered beneath that roof.

'Forgive me if I shock you, reverend sir,' pursued the young man bitterly; 'I forgot for the moment your peculiar moral organisation. You shudder at bad words; the appearance of evil is by all means to be avoided; although hypocrisy, and deceit, and fraud should all shake hands together within us, as they have in you, you sanctimonious slave!'

'Take you care, Frederick Galton; take you care,' rejoined Mr Morrit, his voice trembling with passion. 'There are some things which, once said, we cannot forgive. I wish to act fairly and justly in the matter.'

Frederick laughed aloud. Mrs Hartopp heard him in that awful chamber overhead, and shuddered. Had her poor young master gone mad with

grief? Should she venture down into the parlour? No; his good kind uncle was with him, who would know how to manage him far better than she.

'I repeat,' continued the curate, 'I do not mean to be cruel—to act otherwise than with the firmness I had always intended; only do not rouse that devil within me, which is in every man.'

'What! even in clergymen?' returned Frederick mockingly. 'You astonish me!'

'I will allow you two hundred and fifty pounds a year, which would have been ample for you as a single man; but I will take no notice of such an alliance as you have chosen to form. I ignore it altogether—I will never acknowledge it.'

'That will be terrible, indeed, sir,' observed the young man derisively, 'your patronage being so indispensable; but just at present, I am most interested in the pecuniary question. Am I to understand, once for all, that I am entirely dependent upon your will and pleasure for my income; and that I shall be, until the age of twenty-five, a beggar, indebted to you for such alms as you consider sufficient?'

'Such, sir, are your actual circumstances,' returned the curate coldly, 'although you need not have expressed them in such offensive terms.'

'And if you manage to get me poisoned in the meantime, you will be my sole heir, notwithstanding I may leave wife and children destitute behind me.'

'If you die within the period you mention,' answered Mr Morrit, 'I shall be your sole heir.'

'The very house, then, in which I now stand is yours for the present, and may be yours altogether; the roof under which I was born may no longer shelter me, unless by your good leave!'

'There is no need to talk of such things as these, Frederick Galton,' groaned the curate; 'you have said enough already to supply bitter thoughts for my whole lifetime. How did this dreadful talk begin? This last hour, God knows, has been far, far more terrible than any in my life.'

'I am truly sorry, sir, to have thus inconvenienced you,' pursued the young man with a savage sneer; 'but I wish clearly to understand our relative position. I would not trespass upon your generous forbearance upon any account. I particularly desire to know whether I am your guest here in my father's house—whether, in a word, it is yours or mine.'

'It is yours, Frederick. Your poor father made an especial exception of this cottage when disposing provisionally of the rest of his property, and because there were associations about it doubtless dear to you'—

'Let us waive all that, Mr Morrit, if you please. The time has long gone by for the introduction of sentiment in any discussion between you and me. Am I the master of this house or not?'

'You are; as, of course, you would be,' added the curate hurriedly, 'whether it was left to you or to me.'

'Perhaps,' returned Frederick cynically; 'but, at all events, the house is mine. Good. Then, the first use I make of my proprietorship is to request you to rid me of your presence, which is distasteful to me in the highest degree.'

'What! Frederick Galton, would you turn me out of doors?' pleaded the curate, with a glance at the little carriage-sweep outside, where a knot of

downcast faces were collected, talking together in hushed tones.

'Ay,' replied the young man, 'that I will; I wish there were more to see you. That is where the sting lies, is it not? But cheer up, sir; you may take your revenge afterwards fiftyfold. *Hodie mihi, eras tibi*, as our old friends the classics used to say.'

Yes, Frederick could even refer to those happy days of teacher and pupil, and the thought of them actually strengthened his vindictive purpose. He saw before him, as he imagined, a hypocrite so adroit and smooth, that he had never been so much as suspected of a baseness—one who had obtained, under false pretences, his own respect and love, and who had gained such influence over his father as to persuade him to wrong his only and beloved son. He could not, or would not, perceive the well-meant, though most mistaken, motive which had prompted his uncle to advise such a disposition of the good doctor's very considerable property. He was ignorant that a clause making the curate heir in case of his own demise before a certain age, was necessary to the carrying out of the intention of the testator. He really believed that Mr Morrit had robbed him, and, what was worse, was in a position to rob the wife of his bosom, and the children which she might bear to him, in the event of his own death before he had reached five-and-twenty. He knew that his uncle regarded his marriage as a family humiliation and disgrace, and that he would probably manifest his disapprobation by every means in his power. It galled him beyond measure to be dependent upon him under such circumstances as these, and he cared for nothing, for the present, save to shew his contempt and wrath.

Mr Morrit, on the other hand, was far from satisfied with himself in respect to the advice which he had offered to his late brother-in-law, and indeed had importuned him to act upon. The will had been drawn up and signed only a few months before, at a date actually subsequent to that on which Frederick had taken the imprudent step against which it was mainly directed. If his marriage had been known, matters would doubtless have been arranged far otherwise.

Mr Morrit had intended to use his powers solely for the purpose for which they had been delegated to him, namely, to prevent that social catastrophe which had already occurred; they were never intended as an instrument of punishment after the offence had been committed; but so enraged had the curate been on the sudden disclosure of the *mésalliance*, that he behaved and spoke of them as if they were. He knew that he was treating the young benedict somewhat unfairly, but he had no idea of the proportions his error had assumed in his nephew's eyes. He could not believe, no matter in how ill a light his conduct might appear, that Frederick Galton would seriously insist upon his leaving the cottage. Yet the young man's eyes shone very hard and stern as he stood with his fingers on the handle of the open parlour-door, and motioned with his other hand that his uncle should pass through into the little hall. There is no determination (while it lasts) so immutable as that of passionate wounded pride. Frederick Galton would have said 'Go!' though all the earthly prospects of him and his depended—as, indeed, it seemed they did—upon his saying the contrary.

'You cannot bid me leave this house,' appealed his uncle, with a look quite scared at the dreadful pass to which matters had somehow arrived—'with my best friend lying dead in it—my sister's husband—the father of the lad that was once'—

'We have had enough of that, Mr Morrit, and more than enough,' interrupted the young man grimly. 'Permit me to undo the latch. You have forgotten your hat, sir. Here it is. I beg you will not trouble yourself to cross this threshold again.'

AUSTRALIAN BLACKS.

THE aborigines of Australia are fast disappearing before the advance of civilisation. Already their race has become extinct in Tasmania; whilst in the other colonies only a few scattered families survive as representatives of the numerous tribes who some years ago roamed at will over the whole continent, from Lake Alexandrina to the Snowy Mountains. Along both banks of the noble Murray River, the *gunyahs* of the black men are giving place to sheep-farms and cattle-stations; and in another generation, no traces of their existence will remain, except, perhaps, the bark-covered mounds which mark their burial-places, or the weapons preserved in public museums, or in the collections of the curious. In the narratives of explorers, we occasionally meet with some mention of chance encounters with straggling parties of the natives; but so little is generally known of their peculiar habits and customs, that a brief sketch of the leading features of their mode of life will not, perhaps, prove uninteresting to many of my readers.

Ethnologists suppose that Australia was first peopled by stray voyagers from the Indian seas, who in their small sailing-craft drifted along from island to island through the Eastern Archipelago; and this hypothesis is strengthened by the fact, that although the dialects spoken in various parts of that continent differ very materially from each other, yet they all bear evident traces of an eastern origin, and many words of Tamul and Malayā may be recognised in most of them. The aborigines never composed what may be called a nation, but have always been only a number of scattered groups, each living under a patriarchal form of government, having its own territory and its own peculiar language. The 'Leitchoo-leitchoo,' 'Harri-harris,' and 'Yukka-yukkas,' inhabit the vast tract of country known as the Lower Murray (district), and they may be taken as fair specimens of the race. Each tribe has its own special hunting-grounds, and the oldest man of the party generally issues directions as to the place of encampment; the duty of providing food is assumed by the males, whilst the females manage the *mungoes* (bark-canoes), and get ready the *gunyahs* at the appointed station. At sundown each evening, the various hunting and fishing parties come into camp, and the produce of their labour is all piled up in one common heap; from this, the chief assigns a fair proportion to each family; but first of all he lays aside an ample provision for the

childless, the widows, and the orphans of the tribe. Whether game be scarce or plentiful, all share alike; and if a stranger, even a white man, come up at the time, he is sure of a welcome, and a portion is at once cheerfully offered to him. The greatest reverence is paid by them to old age. If a youth become the possessor of a steel tomahawk, or a hank of fishing-line, he is not permitted to retain it, but is compelled to hand it over to one of his seniors; and he must give ample proof of his courage and activity before he will be allowed to join in the councils of his tribe; then his admission into the ranks of the warriors is celebrated by a grand feast and *corroborry*, at which two of his front teeth are knocked out; and the loss of these is his certificate of manhood.

Opossums, wallabies, and fish are their chief articles of food, varied by the eggs of wild-fowl, or an occasional emu or kangaroo. Wild ducks, too, are often taken in the following manner. When the rivers are full, the waters from them flow to a considerable distance inland, forming large swamps and lakes, which are the resort of countless flocks of black swans, wild geese, and the other genera of that class. The creeks by which the waters of the main rivers are conducted into these lagoons are generally bordered by lofty white gums, which stretch their branches far over the streams; the blacks usually select a spot in the narrowest part, where two of these trees grow on opposite sides; and from their top-most boughs, they suspend their nets across, at the height of forty or fifty feet above the surface of the water. A party composed of their most expert hunters remains in ambush at this spot, while the women and children proceed to the head of the lagoon, from whence they drive the wild-fowl with shouts and cries. The ducks, when fairly startled, fly towards the main stream, and invariably follow in their flight the windings of the creek. When these have reached the vicinity of the hunters, one of that party imitates the shrill scream of the fish-hawk, while some of the others throw circular pieces of bark into the air; and the affrighted wild-fowl, sweeping suddenly down to avoid what they believe to be their dreaded foes, dart blindly, with outstretched necks, into the toils, when they are instantly knocked on the head by their watchful captors; in this way, fifty or sixty are often taken in a few hours.

There are two methods adopted for hunting down the emus. Sometimes long nets are set at points where they have been remarked to resort for water; and a numerous party of the natives lie in wait for them as they come in from the back plains, then shewing themselves in succession at various points, they contrive to drive the surprised emu right into the nets, where they fall on them whilst entangled in the meshes; but even then some of the hunters are often disabled, for an emu kicks as furiously as a horse; and I have frequently known a hunter to have some of his ribs broken by a blow from one of their feet. At other times (chiefly during the breeding season), a single black man crawls out into a plain frequented by these birds, holding a large bush in front of him as he advances; and by means of a hollow bone, he imitates the note of the male emu. This attracts any of the others which are feeding near them. If one of them approaches, he shakes the bush repeatedly; and seeing this, the foolish bird

runs up quite close to satisfy its curiosity, and is at once silently transfixed by the spear of its unseen enemy. The flesh of the emu is considered a great delicacy by the aborigines; and the white stockmen gladly give them tea, sugar, and tobacco in exchange for its marrow, as they consider it to be a specific for rheumatic pains, which are very prevalent in Australia. Opossums are, however, for many months the chief support of the aborigines. Armed with his tomahawk, the black man goes forth into the forest, stepping lightly and rapidly along as he glances upwards, amidst the branches of the box or gum trees, in search of dead limbs and hollow stems. When he meets with any of these, he first examines the trunk of the tree, and learns from the scratches on its bark the probable number of opossums dwelling in it; then cutting notches, to assist him in his ascent, he climbs quickly up until he reaches the entrance to the cavity in which he expects to find his prey; into this he pushes a long slender twig, until its end touches the sleeping opossum (for these animals are nocturnal in their habits), then, withdrawing it, he measures the same length on the outside of the limb, and cutting a hole in with his tomahawk, he drags out his prize, which he kills by dashing its head against the tree; and then goes on to repeat the same process until he has procured a sufficiency of game. The gins (women) peg out the skins on pieces of bark, and when dried, they are used in making rugs for the cold weather. These are also greatly prized by the bushmen, who prefer them to blankets when travelling.

Fish is very plentiful in some parts of the colonies, and in addition to our methods of procuring it, they have also a mode peculiar to themselves. At one of the great corrobories, or tribe-meetings, a number of the most active and powerful young men are selected, and these are divided into two parties, under the command of separate leaders. A portion of some neighbouring river is then chosen, and then one of the divisions proceeds for some distance upwards, and builds huge wood-fires along its banks. After a short interval, the other party, plunging in, swim upwards, diving, splashing, and terrifying the fish as much as possible; and in a few minutes, those up stream spring into the water in succession, holding their spears. They sink down to the bottom, and there they sit, looking upwards; then as the fish pass above their heads, they rapidly transfix and carry them on shore, where they warm themselves at the fires, and then renew their sport, until the approach of night warns them to desist, and return to their camps, for an Australian black will seldom dare to remain in the woods after nightfall.

They are intensely superstitious. The *Bunyup*, a much-dreaded monster, haunts the rivers and lakes; while in the dense scrub the *Mindie* lives, a huge winged serpent which breathes fire, and devours stray black men! Often a warrior in the prime of life dreams that a strange foe has come on him whilst sleeping, and has taken the fat which surrounded his kidneys (*goreye*); and so firmly persuaded of this fact is he, that he will waste gradually away, and ultimately die from this fancied injury. Should he consult one of their wise men, he will be told that nothing can save his life but some of his enemy's fat, and then probably a party of his friends or relatives will start with the intention of procuring this. Then woe to the

unlucky wight belonging to a different tribe who may chance to fall in with them! he is instantly murdered, his kidney-fat torn out from his palpitating body, and the *buckeeing*-party return to their own camp exulting. Then a grand corrobory is held; the sick man is, with many ceremonies, anointed from head to foot with the precious *goreye*, and almost invariably recovers his health. Again, amongst many of the tribes, it is customary to watch the spot where the decomposing body of a deceased chief is laid, until either a black beetle or a maggot crawls forth; the course this takes, is marked, and an armed party start at once in the direction which it has taken, and travel on until they encounter some unfortunate stranger, whose life they at once take, as a sacrifice offered to the manes of the dead hero. Of course, such proceedings naturally provoke reprisals, and thus a petty warfare is always going on amongst the aborigines, which slowly but surely diminishes their number each year. Very little blood is shed by them in open fight. Occasionally, a great war is talked of, and for hundreds of miles, a piece of wood smeared with red is passed on from tribe to tribe—a 'fiery cross,' to summon the warriors to battle; but when they all assemble at the appointed time and place, it ends in a few bragging speeches on both sides, a feast, and a grand corrobory.

Religion they have none. All missionary efforts have been thrown away on them, and even those who, from their very infancy, have associated with white men, and have enjoyed all the comforts of civilisation, will, at a moment's warning, forsake everything to return to the savage-life of the camp. In nothing is the brutality of their nature more clearly shewn than in their treatment of their females. Amongst them, women are considered as an inferior class, and are used almost as beasts of burden; so that it is not at all uncommon to meet a huge black fellow travelling merrily along with no load but his spear or war-club, whilst his unfortunate *leubra* is panting under the weight of their goods and chattels, which she is compelled to carry from camp to camp. Courtship, as the precursor to marriage, is unknown amongst them. When a young warrior is desirous of procuring a wife, he generally obtains one by giving in exchange for her a sister or some other female relative of his own; but if there should happen to be no eligible damsel disengaged in the tribe to which he belongs, then he hovers round the encampment of some other blacks until he gets an opportunity of seizing one of their *leubras*, whom perhaps he has seen and admired when attending one of the grand corrobories. His mode of paying his addresses is simple and efficacious. With a blow of his *nulla-nulla* (war-club), he stuns the object of his 'affections,' and drags her insensible body away to some retired spot, whence, as soon as she recovers her senses, he brings her home to his own *gunyah* in triumph. Sometimes two join in an expedition for the same purpose, and then for several days they watch the movements of their intended victims, using the utmost skill in concealing their presence. When they have obtained the knowledge they require, they wait for a dark, windy night; then quite naked, and carrying only their long 'jag-spears,' they crawl stealthily through the bush until they reach the immediate vicinity of the camp-fires, in front of which the girls they are in search of are sleeping. Slowly and silently, they creep close

enough to distinguish the figure of one of those leubras; then one of the intruders stretches out his spear, and inserts its barbed point amongst her thick flowing locks; turning the spear slowly round, some of her hair speedily becomes entangled with it; then, with a sudden jerk, she is aroused from her slumber, and as her eyes open, she feels the sharp point of another weapon pressed against her throat. She neither faints nor screams; she knows well that the slightest attempt at escape or alarm will cause her instant death, so, like a sensible woman, she makes a virtue of necessity, and rising silently, she follows her captors. They lead her away to a considerable distance, tie her to a tree, and return to ensnare their other victim in like manner. Then, when they have accomplished their design, they hurry off to their own camp, where they are received with universal applause, and highly honoured for their chivalrous exploit. Occasionally, an alarm is given, but even then the wife-stealers easily escape amidst the confusion, to renew their attempt at some future period. When a distinguished warrior carries off a bride from a strange tribe, he will frequently volunteer to undergo 'the trial of spears,' in order to prevent the necessity of his people going to war in his defence; then both the tribes meet, and ten of their smartest and strongest young men are picked out by the aggrieved party. These are each provided with three reed-spears, and a *wommara*, or throwing-stick; and the offender, armed only with his *heiliman* (a bark-shield eighteen inches long by six wide), is led out in front, and placed at the distance of forty yards. Then, at a given signal, the thirty spears are launched at him in rapid succession; these he receives and parries with his shield, and so skilful are the blacks in the use of their own weapons, that very seldom is any wound inflicted. Having successfully passed through this ordeal, the warrior is considered to have fairly earned his leubra, and to have atoned for his offence in carrying her off; so the ceremony generally concludes by the two tribes feasting together in perfect harmony.

Their funeral ceremonies are variously performed in different parts of the colonies. By some, their dead are placed upright in hollow trees; by others, graves are dug in the sand-hills, and lined with bark, for the reception of the corpses, which are deposited in them in a sitting posture; others, again, bury them in the same position as we do; but in all cases, their most valuable arms and other property are deposited in the grave with them, ready for their use when they return to life. The women are always the chief mourners, and they testify their grief by inflicting wounds on their bodies, cutting off their hair, and smearing their heads with pipe-clay, so that an Australian widow is not a very captivating creature in her weeds.

Every one has heard of the wonderful skill in tracking which the natives possess; but if in his rambles a black meets with any strange sign on the earth, he is at once thrown into a state of consternation, dreading the appearance of some unknown and horrible monster. Day and night, he is haunted by that strange appearance, and he never can rest in peace until the mystery which puzzled him is solved. Some years ago, the Murrumbidgee tribes were horrified by finding along the river-bank the prints of a single foot. It was apparently the track of a white man's boot,

but where was its fellow? Mile after mile, the wondering natives followed the mysterious trail, until the track led them up to a shepherd's hut. For a long time, they hesitated what to do, but at length some of the boldest plucked up courage and entered; then they discovered that they had been following a man with a wooden leg. Such a thing had never before been seen or heard of by them; and for a long time after, wherever its owner went, he was followed by a crowd of wondering blacks, and the fame of the *waddy-mundore* (wooden foot) was spread far and near.

A SINGING BIRD.

My soul is dull—through all this day,
Its drooping life will not be stirred;
I'll go a street's length from my way,
To hear the singing of a bird.

A little bird, in wire-bound cage,
Suspended o'er the dusty path,
That more than poet's brightest page,
The power, methinks, to cheer me hath.

I've heard it many times ere now,
When pressed by toil's dull weariness;
And through my soul has passed a glow
I could but feel, not all express.

Ah, there it is! 'mid dust and din,
What wondrous charm is in that voice!
It wakes the dormant life within,
And in its joy does it rejoice.

Still clearer, brighter, every note
Comes sparkling out in silver showers;
Ah! now my soul is all adost,
In dreams of fields and dew-lit flowers.

The fair hedge-rose and clover sweet,
With odour blend of new-mown hay,
I hear the streamlet's dabbling feet
Above the cool white pebbles play.

It poureth out a soaring strain,
Now soft and low, a soothing hymn;
I thrill with joy through every vein—
I drink repose in woodlands dim.

I wake refreshed—where is the cloud
That dimmed my life a while ago?
Yet I am still among the crowd,
That toil-worn passes to and fro.

Who would not, on a summer's day,
When life may thus be sweetly stirred,
A street's length wander from his way,
To hear the singing of a bird?

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